

In the traditional Roma value system, the individual is important only to the extent that he is part of the family and the most important for each person is to observe strictly his or her duties. Their behaviour is controlled by the social opinion in the Gypsy/ Roma quarter. The quarter is the place where one preserves their identity. In the towns and villages, there are one or more quarters populated by Gypsies of different groups – basic socio-cultural formations of the community. From a historical point of view, every group has their own specific ethno-cultural gender traditions with clearly defined unique customs and ways of living.

In the past, during the nomad period, the gender-role behaviours in the extended family and in the group are also strictly defined and observed.

In the Gypsy/ Roma culture, the whole social order functions and acts in order to solidify male domination through gender division of labour.

Nomad or settled, the Gypsies/ Roma have always been integrated within the system determined by the macro-society. It places them in a specific spot on the social ladder and creates more specific relationships. The attitudes towards the Gypsies/ Roma are played out on two grounds – state/ political and living/everyday manners.

Since their first settling in the Bulgarian lands, the Gypsies enter into a relationship with the authorities and become part of the state politics. From historical point of view, their place and role are various, depending on the socio-political order, and with their attitudes and behaviour, the Gypsies often break the state law.

In everyday life, the Gypsies/ Roma are in constant contact and relationship with the people around. The sphere where they are most present is in the crafts and services area. The crafts some of the groups employ are related to the making and maintenance of utensils and household tools for every family. They make tools that are easily and quickly distributed and sold out at markets in the villages, towns and fairs.

The economical side of the Gypsies' life has a strong gender-specific character. The male and female duties are different. The man in the family needs to secure "a good deal", to manufacture the stock on order, and in most cases women sell out the ready-made products. There are crafts that are specifically male, and other that are only female, separate from the male ones. There are also crafts where the man needs the active participation of the woman in. The fairly grown-up children often also participate. In this way, every one has certain contacts within the family and outside of it.

Begging, healing, soothsaying, fortunetelling, powwowing, and the making and un-doing of magic spells are traditional female crafts. With these activities, the Gypsy/ Roma ladies communicate every day and every hour with the surrounding non- Roma people in the macro-society. Over the centuries, the mutual life with the Bulgarian people has lead to the integration of many elements of the magical beliefs, customs, rituals and healing practices of the locals into the Roma culture. Some of them have remained in the cul-